THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH) (a) and (b) : The Govt. of India have not constituted any panel at the apex level to expedite decisions on the infrastructure projects in the Central Sector. Several institutional arrangements to take expeditious decisions on Central Sector Projects have been provided for by the Govt. of India. These are:—

(i) New projects and revised cost estimates of on-going projects costing Rs. 50 crores and above is approved by the Public Investment Board (PIB) and smaller projects between Rs. 20 and Rs. 50 crores are approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC).

(ii) Approval of railway projects costing Rs. 50 crores and above are done by the Expanded Board chaired by the Chairman, Railway Board with Secretaries of the Planning Commission, Dept. of Expenditure and Dept. of Programme Implementation as Members.

(iii) The Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) specially looks into the issues and problems of non-performance of on-going projects in the infrastructure.

Investment decisions are not taken at the Government of India level on projects from the various States/Union Territories and hence no pending list of projects State-wise is available. Collection and compilation of information from all States will take very long time and may not be commensurate with the results achieved.

Evasion of Tax Under VABAL Scheme

971. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the income tax department had been investigating the evasion of the tax by selling duty free imported raw materials obtained under the value-based advanced licensing (VABAL) scheme amounting to crores of rupees by some of the firms/parties as has been brought out in the India Today magazine dated 1—15 April, 1995;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(c) the names of the firms/parties including the amount of tax evaded that sold the imported duty-free raw materials?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): (a) to (c) It is presumed that the Hon'ble Member is referring to page 54 of the April 1—15, 1995 issue of India Today. It is true that the Income-tax Department is investigating evasion of tax in the case of M/s. M.S. Shoes East Limited and other concerns of this Group. This Group was searched in June, 1994 on allegations of misuse of VABAL amongst other allegations. Cases have been centralised in the Central Circle, Delhi for Coordinated investigation. The assessment proceedings have not yet been completed.

Sick Units

972. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sick units under his Ministry;

(b) the total number of units on the verge of closure;

(c) whether BIFR has taken any final decision regarding these units;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, by when a final decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) There are 12 Public Sector Undertakings under the Ministry of Textiles which have been declared as sick. The number of units involved are 116. None of the units has so far been closed under the I.D. Act.

(c) to (e) Of the twelve Public Sector Undertakings which have been referred to BIFR, three Public Sector Undertakings namely BIC, Elgin Mills Company Ltd., and Cawnpore Textiles